

# Glance of the Evil Eye Brings Disease and Death--Ways to Avoid It--Beliefs Which Prevail Throughout Palestine



A WITCH OF ENDOR IN 1910.

THESE WOMEN WEAR BLUE BEADS TO FRIGHTEN THE DEVIL.

BETHLEHEM GIRLS WHO FEAR THE EVIL EYE.

BY FRANK G. CARPENTER.  
Jerusalem.

Have you ever heard of the Evil Eye? It is abroad in the Holy Land, and a glance from it will bring you misfortune. It will lame your horse, cow or camel, and it may cause your child to sicken or die. It can ruin your health or your business, and it may even send your soul to eternal damnation. Those who possess the evil eye are devils incarnate, but you cannot tell who they are. They go about in the shape of innocent-looking men, women and children, and you will not realize that their spells have been cast upon you until misfortune comes.

**Guarding Against the Evil Eye.**  
This belief exists throughout Palestine and is common in this part of the world. Every house in Jerusalem, whether Jew, Moslem or Christian, contains charms to ward off such spells, and every man, woman and child carries a talisman to keep off the witches. Some of these charms are in the shape of a hand, coming from an old Jewish belief or saying that the hand of God will arrest all disasters, and of a Mohammedan one calling upon the name of Fatima, the daughter of the prophet, and also at the front of the hands are sold as charms and the better classes wear hands of gold tied to their necks. Every Jerusalem house has a painting or carving of a hand on its front door to keep off the evil eye; and in the new houses which are now going up they are putting hands over the windows and also at the front doors. They tie bags of charms over each door, which contains an egg, a piece of alum, some garlic and a large blue bead.

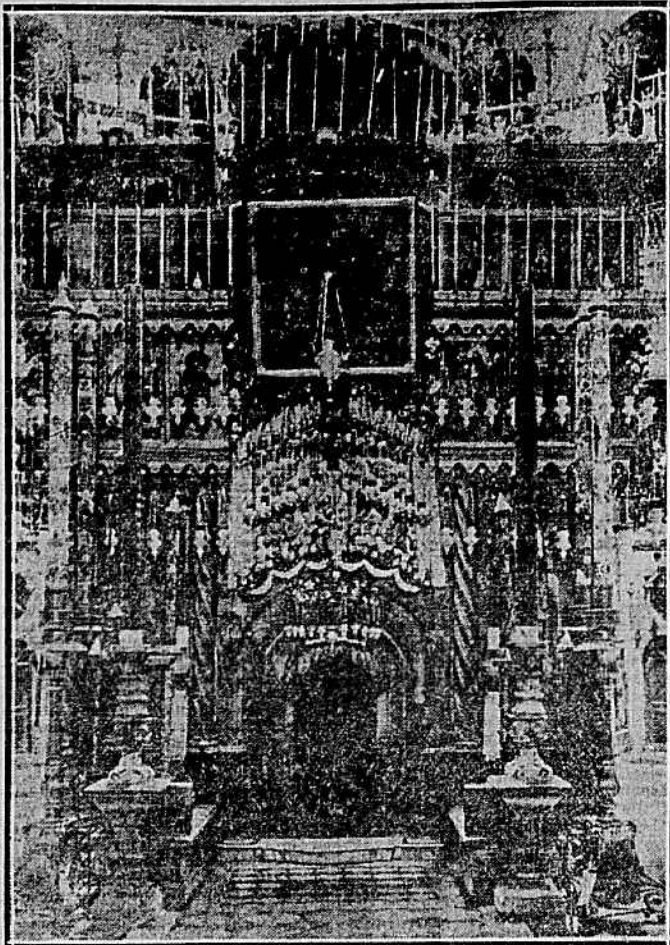
**How Satan Hates Blue.**  
Blue is believed to be a color which frightens the devil. These people think that anything blue will ward off the evil eye, and for this reason horses, donkeys and camels have strings of blue beads round their necks. Every

horse and donkey I have ridden since I set foot in the Holy Land has been decorated with beads, and in a carriage trip I recently took across country, changing my teams several times, every horse of the three we drove had a blue necklace. One was a three-year-old colt, which was lively and skittish. He wore several strands of blue beads, each as big as the nail of my thumb. As he jumped about he broke the string and the beads fell off and were lost. The driver went back to look for them and hunted in vain. He was troubled during the rest of the day, and when toward evening the colt got a stone in his foot and went lame, he said it was the evil eye, which might have been kept off had the beads remained on.

I see many children here wearing blue beads, and they have some beads which are of the shape of an eye. There is one special kind made in Hebron which is very effective. It is a bead of blue glass of the shape of a hand with five fingers. It is worn as a charm.

Some of the children are clad in blue gowns with white circles stamped on them. Every store has some blue inside it, and in some a silver hand is hung up on the wall. The bride wears blue beads at her wedding, and in wedding processions salt, rice and sugar plums are thrown at the bride and bridegroom to keep off the evil eye and bring luck.

**Alum and Other Charms.**  
I have been warned that I should always have some alum in my pocket. This is a charm which will keep off the witches, and it is usually carried along with the beads. Some beads are made with a small piece of alum inside them, and people who are ashamed to show their belief in the beads often carry alum in their pockets. If a child goes out without charms the mother is greatly alarmed, and if she



The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is filled with superstitions.

thinks that some one has cast an evil eye on it she takes a bit of the child's clothes and burns it with incense and a small piece of alum. She first prays over the child, waving this about as she does so. She then throws the charm into an open fire and holds the child over it. As the alum burns it gives off a smoke which takes certain shapes and the mother believes that by looking at them she can learn who has cast the evil eye on her child. This same process is gone through with pretty girls, who feel ill on coming home from a call. They work this charm to find out who has cast a spell on them.

One of the most common guards against the evil eye is a text from the Bible, or the Koran. One from the latter is some Arabic words which mean "Break down the spell of the eye," and another which is "By the blessings of God." These phrases are written and framed and hung up in many of the houses. They are carved upon furniture. For the same reason it is customary to use the name of God at the beginning of every sentence which contains the name of one's friend.

The Jews carry about texts of the Scriptures. The Christians have relics of saints, and some of the natives here think they have pieces of the true cross.

The people of Palestine do not like to have themselves complimented without you use the name of God in the sentence containing the compliment. Such expressions are bound to bring misfortune and possibly trouble and death. If you call a boy or a girl pretty his mother's heart is filled with terror, and she straightway throws out her hand, extending the index and little fingers in such a way as is supposed to ward off the devil and the evil consequences of your remark. If you wish to remark upon the beauty of a child you must begin the sentence with "May God surround thee," and you may then go on as you please. If you should not call the child on the head and fall to use this sentence, the mother upon returning home will take the child into a room and put it in the middle of the floor. She will then shovel up some dust from each of the four corners, and throw it into the fire, crying: "Fire on thee, evil eye."

Similar precautions should be taken in naming a horse or a donkey. If a man has a spirited horse which he fears the people may admire, he carries with him some salt. As he rides through the crowds he will now and then sprinkle a little salt under the feet of the horse, especially if he sees the crowd looking at it. If any one asks what he will sell the animal, he must answer yes, but if asked what he will take he makes the price so high that the man cannot buy. At such times he usually requests the would-be purchaser to stop thinking of his horse for fear it may bring misfortune.

Another superstition in regard to salt relates to babies at birth. It is sprinkled over their bodies to keep off the devil, and it is used at all other ceremonies connected with children.

**Spirits Who Inhabit Human Beings.**  
The people here believe in one class of spirits who live underground, but who are fed by those who live upon earth. They come up and take the wheat from the threshing floors and bread from the ovens, and the only way to keep them from doing so is to utter a sentence from the Koran or Bible as you put the bread in. These same spirits hover about the fire, and if you quench it without asking Mahomet to protect you and spirits are liable to beat you or perhaps lame you for life. These underground spirits are known as the Jan. Their favorite place of residence is below the front doorsteps, and for this reason women are not allowed to sit on the doorsteps. The Jan are supposed to be an organized body, having a sultan, a court and regular officials. They keep guard on the food stores, and are on the whole fairly good fellows. They are said to be fond of human company, and it is whispered that they sometimes assume human shape and marry mortals. They are most common in Egypt. One may attract a Jan by whistling, and it is said that the girls here frequently whistle. Some of the men of Palestine are jealous of the Jan, thinking they have association with their wives, and some will not look at a real woman for fear the Jan girls, whom they dread to be in love with them, will object.

**Married in a Cemetery.**  
One of the queer superstitions which prevails here in Jerusalem is that a marriage in a cemetery will propitiate the Lord and cause Him to favor the bride and groom. A girl and her native Jews, and instances of it have recently occurred on account of the drought. We have had no rain for weeks, and the crops are drying up. People are crazy over the prospect. There is also an epidemic of infantile paralysis, which has been carrying off the children. The people think that God is angry with them, and perhaps wrath because the marriages have been few. To pacify Him they have had weddings in the cemeteries, which is considered a most unlucky place for starting upon the life matrimonial.

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Indeed, it is so unlucky that they have had to hire people to get married there. At a wedding which took place this week the couple received \$200 in gold, and also food for two years, as a present for having the ceremony there. In this case the groom was a Jew from Yemen, Arabia, and the bride a Jewess from Aleppo, in Syria. The bride was late coming, and the 3,000 worshippers who had assembled to see the ceremony had to wait for two hours. She was finally carried in under a canopy, and took her place on one side of an open grave, while the bridegroom stood on the other. Standing thus the marriage vows were exchanged. Two more cemetery weddings are planned, but it is difficult to get willing couples, as such marriages are supposed to be disastrous. Nevertheless, the charm seems to be working. The wind has changed since the first ceremony occurred, and it may rain by and by.

**Superstitious Pilgrims.**  
Not only the natives, but also the pilgrims who come here by the ten thousand a year, are superstitious. The most of them believe that every spot pointed out by the monks is the actual locality of the event alleged to have occurred there. The pilgrims come from the borders of Siberia and from all parts of Western Asia and Africa as well as from Greece and the islands of the Mediterranean Sea. They walk over the Holy Land with staffs in their hands and kneel down and kiss the places where they believe Jesus trod. They even kiss the stones of the streets here, not knowing or forgetting that there have been three or four Jerusalem buried below the site of the present one.

I have seen these pilgrims crawling on their knees through the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. They creep into the vestibule and kiss the stone of union upon which it is claimed the body of Christ was anointed for burial. This is a slab of rose-colored marble about two feet wide and seven feet long. The stone is set in the floor and much of its surface has been worn away by the kissing. Not a few of the pilgrims from Russia bring linen cloths with them just large enough to make a shroud. They lay these on the stone and think them blessed by the contact. They will carry the cloth back home and be buried in it, believing a shroud will be a safe passport to heaven.

Near the stone of union is the spot on which it is said the Virgin Mary stood while Christ was on the cross. It is also worn away by kissing. Going on into the great rotunda and turning to the right we reach a church believed to be the place where the body of Christ was laid in the tomb. It is a small, simple building, about as high as a chair and about as big around as a four-gallon crock. This is the centre of the world, and is honored as such. I saw Russian peasant girls kissing it, and further on observed others who came here to place their place until it seemed to me their lips must wear out. Kisses are pressed upon these spots by thousands of mouths every day, and if every lip leaves its microbes all the diseases of the world must be in the bacteriae here.

**Covered With Diamonds.**  
It is hard to estimate the value of the offerings which the pilgrims lay on their shrines. Those who come are of all classes, and some bring the savings of years. The poor lay their pennies in the hands of the priests, and others in the slot boxes, which may be seen at almost every corner. There is much gold and precious stones. A life-sized image of the Virgin Mary which I saw in the Greek Church was covered with diamonds. The image was made of wax and was dressed in a white robe. Its face was painted. An oval pearl as big as the end of my thumb hung on the forehead, while the waxen fingers held a score or more of rings. Some of the rings were set with diamonds, some with sapphires and rubies, and others with opals. Opals in Palestine are looked upon as the sign of good luck and not bad, as with us.

The most of the rings were costly, and each was presented to the Virgin as a love offering. On the sliken lap of the image lay a great golden heart as thick as my thumb and about as big as the end of my thumb. It was studded with emeralds and diamonds. This heart is a present from Franz Joseph, the Emperor of Austria, who has made many costly gifts to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In the grotto of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is a more gorgeously decorated, although some of its jewels are said to be paste.

**The Church of the Holy Sepulchre.**  
The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is a beehive of superstition. It is supposed to be the spot where Christ was crucified. The Bible tells us that this was outside Jerusalem, but the Church of the Sepulchre is to-day far within the walls. This, however, is not a proof that the place is not correct, for the walls of Jerusalem have been thrown down and rebuilt again and again, and this is especially so of those on Mount Zion, where this great church stands. The hill where Christ was crucified was made up of terraces of rock, and that is the nature of the foundation of this church. The place was located by St. Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, who came here about 300 years after Christ

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died and found the true cross among the rubbish on the side of the hill where the church stands. She had the cross dug out and carried to Constantinople, whence later on some pieces of it were sent to Rome. One section as long as your arm is said to be here in Jerusalem, and there are so many other pieces scattered over the world that I venture you could build a house with them.

Shortly after this discovery a church was erected on the spot, and since then others have been built, destroyed and rebuilt, until we now have this great edifice, which has, I venture, an area of several acres. It is surmounted by a cross rising from a dome as big as that of our National Capitol.

The Church of the Sepulchre is not beautiful, and its position in the heart of Jerusalem, surrounded by bazaars, convents, monasteries and hotels is by no means imposing. The front of it is covered with carvings, some of which are from ancient temples, and over the doors are bas-reliefs or scenes from the Bible. One of these represents the raising of Lazarus, with the Saviour standing at the front and Mary at his feet. At the command of Christ Lazarus is seen rising from the dead.

It is under the dome of this church

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